

## No limitations on access to conflict areas to evacuate civilians, but safety must be the priority

WHILE the Union Government was working towards achieving lasting peace, armed conflict between the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) erupted in April, forcing residents in the area to flee their homes.

The Kachin State Government, the Red Cross and social and religious organizations have helped the residents as much as possible.

To evacuate and assist the residents in the conflict areas, the Kachin State Government formed four working committees and sent them to four different areas to observe the situation. Depending on the security situation, it also permitted rescue groups to help evacuate the people trapped amid the armed conflicts.

But the situation remains dangerous, in large part because there are landmines in the conflict areas. The Kachin State Government considers safety the priority for the volunteers who will evacuate the people, and takes the responsibility for their well-being seriously. It is not true that we denied NGOs access to the conflict areas.

We cannot say that there are no people who are trapped amid the armed conflicts. Some areas are within the reach of the Kachin State government's administration, but some are not.

Some of the people trapped in the conflict areas were evacuated and sent to the homes of their relatives of their own volition. Others are being sheltered temporarily at monasteries and churches due to security concerns.

The aid provided to the victims can help them for a short period. Armed conflicts cause loss of lives on both sides, and civilians are innocent victims.

The first priority is for peace to prevail and the second is the rule of law in Kachin State.

The rule of law includes elimination of illegal drugs. Without peace, no one can fully carry out development works. This is one of the reasons why elimination of the illegal drug trade is necessary.

To evacuate the civilians, the voices of the people are very important. The evacuation committees of the Kachin State Government are ready to evacuate the people once they have received information from the people.

As the Union Government is committed to cessation of armed conflicts which have lasted for more than 70 years and to laying down a foundation for building a democratic federal republic for and by the people, all people and organizations are urged to cooperate for the flowering of new thoughts and new opinions and join hands to build a democratic federal republic in unity. ■

# The Holder of NV Card and the Freedom of Movement

By Maung Muditar

ANY person residing in continuity within the jurisdiction of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar irrespective of national race, religion is required to abide by the existing laws and also needs to hold a Citizenship Scrutiny Card (or) National Registration Card (or) some sort of Identification Card.

### NV Card means

NV card means the Identity Cards for National Verification for a person who is to undergo for scrutiny assessment for citizenship. Before the issuance of NV Card, the Temporary Identification Card known as White Card was being issued in the past.

In accordance with the stipulations mentioned in the 1949 Union Citizenship Residency Regulations Act Section (5) Sub Section (1) and the 1951 Union of Myanmar Residency Registration Regulation By-Law Section (13) Sub Section (3), the Temporary Identification Cards were being issued to those residing in Myanmar. On 11 February 2015, the Office of the President of Myanmar issued a Notification Number 19/2015 declaring that the validity of Temporary Identification Cards expired on 31 March 2015 and that cards were to be surrendered not later than 31 May 2015.

Subsequently, NV Cards were issued beginning 1 June 2015, it was learnt. The NV Cards were being issued to those persons who are not included in the list of the national races of Myanmar but actually residing within the jurisdiction of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and also to those persons who were residing at the border areas without holding any identification cards. The NV Cards are being issued with the clear and good purpose to identify the persons residing within the jurisdiction of the country while they are supposed to undergo scrutiny process or waiting for such verification procedure under the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law.

The majority of such Temporary Identification Card holders were people of Islamic faith residing in Rakhine State. These people residing in Myanmar are

required to differentiate with those persons residing in other country. Therefore, arrangements are being made to issue the NV Cards in an attempt for the purpose of scrutiny process of verification of Myanmar citizenship.

Many people thought in general that the NV Cards are issued exclusively only in the Rakhine State. In fact, the NV Cards are issued in all Regions and States of the country. From 1 June 2015 to 24 April 2018, a total of (61,961) NV Cards were issued in the country and that (15,424) NV Cards were issued in Rakhine State.

Apart from Rakhine State, the NV Cards holders residing in other Regions and States have had cooperated in full with the scheme of citizenship scrutiny process, eventually acquiring some type of identification cards to enjoy the status of full citizenship rights.

### Responsibilities to abide and follow

Those who are holding NV Cards have the responsibilities to abide and follow.

The NV Card is to be maintained and kept properly in hand by the holder and that the person must show to the officer who asked for it under the 1951 Union of Myanmar Residency Registration Regulation By-Law Section (29).

The NV Card is not transferable to other (or) not to be entrusted to any person.

When a NV Card was lost, damaged (or) unreadable, it is to be reported to the relevant Township Immigration Office.

Marking or alteration is not to be made on the NV Card.

No person must hold more than one NV Card.

If a NV Card is found somewhere else, it is to be handed over immediately to the relevant officer.

If the holder of the NV Card passed away, the household head or the member of household must hand over the NV Card to the relevant Officer within seven days.

The NV Card holders must abide by the local rules, regulations and directives issued by the Regional and State Governments.

If a NV Card holder is traveling, the person must take the NV Card in person to enable to show the relevant office if and when required.

If and when, the person is awarded with citizenship card, then the NV Card is to be surrendered to the relevant officer.

If anyone breach the above mentioned rules, the person is liable to be taken legal action under the Immigration Act Section (6) Sub Section (2).

While NV Card holders have the responsibility to observe the rules, they also have the rights to enjoy as follows.

As the NV Card holder has been registered as the person residing within the jurisdiction of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the NV Card stands out as Identity Card to witness as a person residing under the sovereignty of Myanmar.

The NV Card holders have the equal rights similar to others who are holding recognized identification cards in their departure for international waters (including the fishery business).

The NV Card holder has the right to apply to undergo the scrutiny process for citizenship. However, during the period of scrutiny process for citizenship, the person must hold and maintain the NV Card.

Those persons who applied for scrutiny process must be given a decision for a certain status under the Myanmar Citizenship Law. The person has the rights to enjoy according to the citizenship status under the existing law.

Those offspring who are born of NV Card holders have the rights to apply to undergo scrutiny process for citizenship under the existing law.

Those who are holding NV Cards have the rights to travel to any parts of the country with the approval and permission of the relevant Regional and State governments under the local rules, regulations and directives.

Those who are holding NV

Cards residing in the Rakhine State have the rights to travel legally to Bangladesh through the established official Border Gates with the Border Pass.

Those who are holding NV Cards in the Rakhine State have the rights to travel freely within the township that they are residing. The travel must be in accordance with the rules, regulations and directives issued by the Rakhine State government.

The NV Card holders have the equal rights similar to others who are holding recognized identification cards in their departure for international waters (including the fishery business). (The persons must have relevant identification cards and NV Cards along with

the jurisdiction of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Moreover, the person is entitled to apply for scrutiny process in acquiring the citizenship. After the legal scrutiny process, a decision on the status would be awarded to the person and the lawful reward could be enjoyed. The benefits and entitlements are clearly defined for the NV Card holders.

Therefore, the NV Card is the first and foremost document to hold on in the scrutiny process on the pathway to enjoy rights of citizenship. The NV Card holder has been recognized as person residing in the jurisdiction of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. In accordance with the term "National Verification", the holder must undergo for scrutiny process.

From 1 June 2015 to 24 April 2018, a total of (61,961) NV Cards have been issued. Among those who applied for citizenship, (91) persons have been awarded Citizenship Cards and (525) persons have been granted Citizenship Approval Status, making a total of (616) persons. These person are granted full rights as citizenships according to law.

In the past, the application process of the NV Card holders were mostly delayed for some extended time. During the present government, the application of the NV Card holders are processed according to law within five months from the date of application, and eventually an appropriate identification card is being issued.

In the Rakhine State, the persons who have come under the NV Card program are being intimidated, killed, encountered death threat and put on heavy pressure by the terrorists. Therefore, the number of persons is few coming up in the application for the NV Cards. Eventually, the persons who apply for citizenship scrutiny process are also few.

The advantages for the NV Card holders are clearly and visibly mentioned. Moreover, they are allowed to travel to Bangladesh with Border Pass through legally established border gates. For those who have engaged in the fishing trade are allowed to go to the international waters. The NV Cards are the legal documents to witness as lawful residents resid-

ing inside Myanmar. The authorities and officials are handling and processing with priority on the cases for the NV Card holders who wanted to travel other places on education, social and emergency health matters.

These days, a matter of controversial talk was brewing among the public with much suspicion and alarm that the NV Card holders are allowed to travel freely to other regions and states. In fact, if the NV Card holders wanted to travel to other places in the country, the persons must apply the travel authorizations to the relevant regions and states in accordance with the local orders and directives. When the travel permission is accorded, then the person must get the Temporary Travel Form (4) and start the journey to designated place.

This set of procedure is already existed in the past and that the orders and directives are still in continuity in travel process. Without undergoing the process of scrutiny and in the absence of citizenship status, the full rights of citizenship could never be enjoyed. In other words, the NV Card holders could not travel freely at owns will in the country without the proper authorization. Approval of travel from the authority is to be sought. The application must be filed with sound reasons on the intended travel. If a person wanted freedom of movement to travel liberally, then it is required to ask for scrutiny process for the citizenship scheme at the earliest.

If a person is not in line with the stipulated procedures and set rules, then it may have to seek permission from the authorities for the intended travel. With the proper processing and formalities of township, state and central, the person may have the full rights as the status being awarded.

With this information regarding the rights of travel for the NV Card holders, it may be wise to repeat that they are not (not) allowed to move on without the proper permissions of local authorities under the existing orders and directives. It is my honor and pleasure in clarifying and sharing the ground reality to the esteemed readers and public over the travel plan of NV Card holders.

(Translated by UMT of Ahlon)

## New UN report calls for Asia-Pacific to step up development reform efforts to meet Sustainable Development Goals by 2030

COUNTRIES in Asia and the Pacific have made inroads towards achieving several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, but progress remains uneven across the region, according to a new report by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Launched at the 74th Commission session (CS74), which opened today in Bangkok, the Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2017 assesses how far the region has progressed in implementation of the SDGs, two years after the 17 Goals were adopted by world leaders in 2015. The Report shows that satisfactory progress has been made at the regional level towards eradicating poverty (Goal 1), promoting health and well-being (Goal 3), and achieving quality education for all (Goal 4).

However, progress on many of the targets has fallen short and in some cases, is deteriorating. Out of the 57 targets analyzed in the Report, 37 show insufficient progress in the region, while negative trends are noted on seven targets related to decent work and economic growth (Goal 8), industry (Goal 9), climate action (Goal 13) and sustainable use of oceans and forests (Goals 14 and 15).

Launching the report at the CS74 senior official's segment, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP underscored that while there is success to celebrate, much more needs to be done to ensure that no one is left behind by 2030.

"Our region needs to significantly step up its development reform efforts in several areas. Inequalities are found to be widening because rapid economic growth has not always been equitably shared," said Dr. Akhtar. "More balanced and equitable growth must remain a priority. Across all the SDG areas, work to find multilateral solutions to overcome transboundary challenges must be enhanced for our benefit and that of future generations."

The Report highlights significant disparities in progress across subregions and countries according to income level, which could further threaten the Asia-Pacific region's ability to achieve the SDGs. There are also major gaps in the availability of data. Only 25 per cent of the official SDG indicators can currently be used to assess progress in the region, which limits robust assessments by countries and can impede efforts to overcome development challenges. Political leaders and high-level government and UN officials from across the region are convening at CS74 this week to discuss the theme of 'Inequality in the era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'. The annual gathering comprises two parts, including the senior officials segment from 11 to 12 May, in preparation for the ministerial segment, which will be held from 14 to 16 May at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok. —ESCAP ■

### Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their works to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kye Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon or by email to [dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com](mailto:dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com) with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Real name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.). — Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar news office